

14 STAKEHOLDER PROJECTS

The Placer County Office of Emergency Services has identified, in coordination with other Stakeholders in the County, a number of projects in their Disaster Mitigation Action Plan (DMA) that deal with the Wildland Urban Interface. Following are the Project Summaries as provided in their plan.

Project #1

DEVELOP A COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PREVENTION PLAN (CWFP) FOR THE WESTERN SLOPE OF PLACER COUNTY

Issue/Background: Fuels/vegetation management is ongoing. The HMPC agreed that ongoing vegetation management is THE most important factor in reducing the wildfire hazard in Placer County.

The Placer County Fire Safe Alliance (“the Alliance”), with its open partnership, including the various fire safe councils and major landowners and managers, is uniquely situated to assist with the coordination for and prioritization of scarce resources.

Because of the difference in needs between the Tahoe Basin and the Western Slope of the County, and because the Tahoe Basin already has a Community Wildfire Protection Plan under development, this Action applies to the development of a CWFP for the Western Slope only. The projects defined as a result of this effort will result in Fuels Management efforts coordinated among the Alliance stakeholders, as well as the general public, on the Western Slope of the County.

Vegetation management projects will result in ongoing fuels/vegetation reduction and management on public and private lands; implementation and enforcement of defensible space requirements on private land for both existing properties and new development; and development of criteria for on-going maintenance of the fuels management and defensible space program.

The plan will be consistent with the document “Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan: A Handbook for Wildland-Urban Interface Communities” at <http://www.stateforesters.org/pubs/cwpphandbook.pdf>. As appropriate, projects defined in the CWFP will be included in the update of this Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, due in 2009. Given how closely inter-related the communities are on the Western Slope, defining a CWFP at the individual Fire Safe Council level is not the most effective methodology. Instead, the Alliance partners plan to develop the CWFP for the Western Slope in phases. Phase 1, already in process, focuses on the foothills communities which are represented by the following Fire Safe Councils:

- Iowa Hill/Foresthill FSC
- Ponderosa FSC (City of Colfax, Weimar-Applegate-Colfax Area Municipal Advisory Council and Meadow Vista Municipal Advisory Council)
- Greater Auburn (City of Auburn, North Auburn/Placer Consolidated Fire Protection District, Bowman, and Christian Valley)

Subsequent phases will be developed once Phase 1 is completed.

Other Alternatives: Continue to implement programs at the local level, without an overall system of risk assessment and resource prioritization.

Responsible Office: Placer County Fire Safe Alliance partners, including the various Fire Safe Councils, fire agencies, Placer County Office of Emergency Services

Priority (H, M, L): High

Cost Estimate: The plan is being developed as part of existing agency workloads. Funding for public meetings and review copies of the plan may be needed, but the cost will be minimal.

Benefit: Coordinated projects with a broader impact than individual efforts by the County, agencies, groups, businesses, and individual landowners.

Potential Funding: National Fire Plan, Healthy Forest Initiative; WUI Grant; local financing, private foundations, grants from state bond acts, Sierra Conservancy, and Title III funds from the *Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act of 2000* (AKA “HR 2389 Timber Tax”) payments to Placer County, PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes).

Schedule: Phase 1: Steps 1, 2, and 3, as defined in the Handbook, are already completed and Phases 4, 5, and 6 are in process, with a target completion of Fall 2005.

Schedule for other phases will be determined once Phase 1 is complete.

Potential Funding: The roadside fuel breaks are on private property. This project would offer staff to provide follow up recommendations. Costs could be reduced by sharing costs with private property owners.

In general, the cost of maintenance is about \$500 per acre, depending on the method used. The cost share for the project is estimated to be \$78,000, with the property owners contributing an equal amount of their own funds and/or labor. The County Chipper Program will be used to help reduce the overall cost. The costs include funds for staff time and project management.

The responsibility for maintenance of the demonstration fuel breaks varies. The Aeloia Heights fuel break is on public and private lands; Alta's is managed by the Alta Fire Safe Council; the one at Foresthill School is maintained by the school; and the Maidu project is on private property within the Auburn Fuel Break and will be maintained as part of that project (described separately). This project would offer staff to provide follow-up recommendations plus cost-share funds for the private lands portions of the Aeloia Heights and Alta fuel breaks.

Possible source of funding are National Fire Plan, the Healthy Forests Initiative, CalFed grants, and EQIP.

Schedule: Every 3-5 years, if funding is available, starting in the spring of 2005 or 2006.

Project #2

MAINTENANCE ON SHADED FUEL BREAKS AND DEMONSTRATION FUEL BREAKS

Issue/Background: Several roadside shaded fuel breaks and demonstration fuel breaks were created from 1998 to 2002 using a grant from Proposition 204 funds and other sources. In order for these fuel breaks to continue to be effective, maintenance must be done on a periodic basis.

The fuel breaks are on primarily private property, and the property owners are expected to perform the maintenance with some cost-sharing assistance. The fuel break locations, size, and resources protected are listed in the following table:

Location	# Acres	# Homes Protected	Value*
Aeolia Heights demo SFB	20		Educational
Alta demo SFB	20		Educational
Foresthill School demo SFB	25		Educational
Maidu demo SFB	20		Educational
Foresthill Divide Rd. (Todd Valley)	36	1,500	391,500,000
Michigan Bluff	43	14	3,654,000
Boole Road	11	100	26,100,000
Cerro Vista	16	100	26,100,000
Ponderosa Road	21	100	26,100,000
Spring Garden Road	25	100	26,100,000
Yankee Jims Road	55	50	13,050,000
TOTALS	312	1,964	512,604,000

*The value is based on the average home value for the unincorporated County from the Assessor's Roll Values. The number of homes is approximate.

Other Alternatives: Taking no action will result in the continued regrowth of vegetation and the disappearance of the fuel breaks.

Responsible Office: Rich Gresham, Manager, Placer County Resource Conservation District

Priority (H, M, L): Medium

Cost Estimate: Estimated cost is \$500 per acre for a total of \$156,000.

Benefit: The roadside fuel breaks protect homes valued at approximately \$512,604,000 and also shield evacuation routes and firefighter access. The demonstration fuel breaks educate and encourage homeowners to create and maintain a defensible space. The cost of \$156,000 is 0.03 percent of the values protected.

Potential Funding: The roadside fuel breaks are on private property. This project would offer staff to provide follow-up recommendations. Costs could be reduced by sharing costs with private property owners.

In general, the cost of maintenance is about \$500 per acre, depending on the method used. The cost share for the project is estimated to be \$78,000, with the property owners contributing an equal amount of their own funds and/or labor. The County Chipper Program will be used to help reduce the overall cost. The costs include funds for staff time and project management.

The responsibility for maintenance of the demonstration fuel breaks varies. The Aeolia Heights fuel break is on public and private lands; Alta's is managed by the Alta Fire Safe Council; the one at Foresthill School is maintained by the school; and the Maidu project is on private property within the Auburn Fuel Break and will be maintained as part of that project (described separately). This project would offer staff to provide follow-up recommendations plus cost share funds for the private lands portions of the Aeolia Heights and Alta fuel breaks.

Possible sources of funding are the National Fire Plan, the Healthy Forests Initiative, CalFed grants, and EQUIP.

Schedule: Every 3 – 5 years, if funding is available, starting in the spring of 2005 or 2006.

Project #3

ANNUAL DEFENSIBLE SPACE INSPECTIONS PROGRAM IN THE UNINCORPORATED COUNTY

Issue/Background: Defensible space is recognized by CDF as the single most important action that a homeowner can take to increase the chances that homes and other structures will survive a wildfire. Defensible space also helps to protect the wildland from a structure fire. Another benefit of defensible space is that it provides firefighters with a safe place to work while defending a home from fire.

When SB 1369 took effect on January 1, 2005, the minimum defensible space requirement increased from 30 feet to 100 feet.

Many homeowners are not aware of the requirements of defensible space, especially new residents who move to the County from highly urban areas where it is normal to expect a fire engine, or even multiple engines, to be dedicated to fighting a structure fire. However, during a wildfire, this is not feasible. Homes and other structures must be able to withstand an approaching wildfire with no assistance from firefighters. Also, fire fighters will not defend a home unless they can do so safely.

Regular inspections, based on the requirements of California Law as specified in Public Resources Code 4291, can help ensure that homeowners create and maintain adequate defensible space. The inspection process is also an opportunity to educate and motivate the homeowners to take action to improve their wildfire safety.

While CDF has the legislative mandate to perform these inspections, in reality budgets do not provide for sufficient staffing to do this beyond the occasional inspection requested by a homeowner. Since 1998, PRC 4291 inspections in the Placer County Foothills have been funded by grants from Prop 204, the Community-Based Wildfire Protection Program through the California Fire Safe Council and BLM, and Title III funds from the *Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act of 2000* (AKA “HR 2389 Timber Tax”) payments to Placer County.

Future programs need to expand to include the south County, especially the South Placer Fire Protection District and the Loomis Fire Protection District.

Other Alternatives: Taking no action will result in less compliance with defensible space requirements.

Responsible Office: Placer County Fire Safe Alliance partners, including fire agencies

Priority (H, M, L): High

Cost Estimate: Inspections cost approximately \$10.50 for the inspector’s time and insurance, mileage, and a manager. Adding administrative overhead brings the cost to

about \$11.50.

(These are 2001 dollars.) An additional cost is for literature to handout. The most important handout is the Homeowner's Checklist, which can be downloaded at http://www.fire.ca.gov/php/education_checklist.php.

The most recent grant for Defensible Space Inspections was for \$79,746.67 with an in-kind match for literature and other support by CDF for \$13,236.50. These inspections focused on the foothills communities of Foresthill, Iowa Hill, Weimar, Meadow Vista, Applegate, the Colfax area, etc. There are approximately 7,000 homes in this area. Inspections cost approximately \$10.50 for the inspector's time and insurance, mileage, and a manager. Adding administrative overhead brings the cost to about \$11.50. An additional cost is for literature to handout. The most important handout is the Homeowner's Checklist, available at http://www.fire.ca.gov/php/education_checklist.php or from CDF. Color copies of this document cost from \$1.50 to \$2.00 depending on the number of copies.

Benefit: Life Safety; Reduce property Loss. A cost of \$13.00 per home inspected (\$11.50 + \$1.50) is about 0.005 percent of the average Assessor's Roll Value of about \$260,000 per home (which is far below actual replacement value).

Potential Funding: Potential sources of funding include: National Fire Plan, Healthy Forests Initiative, and Title III funds from the *Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act of 2000* (AKA "HR 2389 Timber Tax") payments to Placer County.

Schedule: Annually, as funding permits. Since not every property needs to be inspected every year, doing inspections on a rolling basis would allow smaller annual grant amounts to be needed.

Project #4

ONGOING COUNTY CHIPPER PROGRAM OPERATION FUNDS

Issue/Background: Since 1998, the Placer County Chipper Program has provided a free service to residents of the County. This helps to lower the costs of creating and maintaining defensible space and also reduces the amount of outdoor burning and the associated air pollution as well as escaped fires. The County owns four chippers and tow vehicles, purchased from a PG&E settlement and supplemented by a Prop 204 grant. Maintenance is performed by CDF. Therefore the annual cost is for the four crew managers, one for each chipper, and the crews. In order to keep costs down, trustees from the County Jail are used as crews.

Response to the program has been excellent. As of June 2004, an estimated total of 17,486 tons of vegetation had been processed through the Chipper Program since its

inception. The number of parcels chipped has steadily increased every year.

Other Alternatives: No Action -If the Chipper Program is not continued, there is a risk of lower compliance with defensible space requirements as well as increased burning.

Responsible Office: Rich Gresham, Manager, Placer County Resource Conservation District; CDF NYP, Placer County

Priority (H, M, L): High

Cost Estimate: The cost of operation is about \$191,000 annually, or an average of \$76 per parcel chipped.

Benefit: Life Safety; Reduce property Loss. A cost of \$76 per parcel is about 0.03 percent of the average Assessor's Roll Value of about \$260,000 per home (which is far below actual replacement value).

Potential Funding: Current funding is through a WUI grant.

Schedule: Ongoing annually.

Project #5

ESTABLISH ADDITIONAL FIRE SAFE COUNCILS ON THE WESTERN SLOPE

Issue/Background: As can be seen on the Wildland Fire Risk Map in Section 4.2 of this plan, a bit less than half of the portion of the County west of Auburn is rated at a High risk and the remainder is rated at a Medium risk.

Many residents of this area are not aware of the wildfire hazard. This hazard was illustrated by the 2001 Sierra Fire in the Loomis/Rocklin area, which destroyed six homes, numerous outbuildings, and several vehicles. A couple of years ago, a home was lost to a grass fire in Loomis!

Establishing Fire Safe Council(s) in this area of the County is a first step towards educating local residents about the fact that they live in an urban forest and there is a wildfire hazard, and motivating them to take appropriate action to reduce their risk.

Other Alternatives: Taking no action will continue to leave these homes at risk.

Responsible Office: Placer County Fire Safe Alliance partners, including local fire agencies

Priority (H, M, L): High

Cost Estimate: The major cost involved is fire agency manpower, especially on the part of the Prevention Officer/Fire Marshal. There may also be some administrative cost for mailings, etc. However, most of these costs can probably be included in normal operating expenses.

The “Core Group” models used by the Greater Auburn Area Fire Safe Council and the Ponderosa Fire Safe Council in their Partnership Agreements could be replicated to create a local base of involved citizens to work with their local fire agencies.

Benefit: Fire Safe Councils have been demonstrated across the state as being effective in informing and motivating local residents to take action to create and maintain defensible space. It costs almost nothing to start and operate a fire safe council and to create local education programs. Grant funding for larger projects will be worked through the Placer County Fire Safe Alliance partners and the developing Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Potential Funding: Existing Budgets

Schedule: Start up at least one additional Fire Safe Council in 2005. Sub-chapters could be implemented via homeowner associations, neighborhood watch groups, and other existing community-based organizations.

Project #6

ENHANCE ENFORCEMENT OF COUNTY BUILDING CODES TO INCREASE COMPLIANCE WITH SB 1369 DEFENSIBLE SPACE AND OTHER FIRE SAFE REQUIREMENTS IN THE UNINCORPORATED COUNTY

Issue/Background: When SB 1369 took effect on January 1, 2005, the minimum defensible space distance increased from 30 feet to 100 feet (or to the property line). Further, for new or replacement construction, SB 1369 requires that the owner shall obtain a certification from the local building official that the dwelling or structure, as proposed to be built, complies with all applicable state and local building standards, as well as upon completion of the construction or rebuilding, the owner shall obtain from the local building official, a copy of the final inspection report that demonstrates that the dwelling or structure was constructed in compliance with all applicable state and local building standards.

The building inspection process is an excellent time to initiate compliance with SB 1369. For example, if the creation of the minimum 100 feet (or to the property line) defensible space area was required before the building is started to be built, it is a lot more likely to be maintained after construction. This would also be a good time to enforce the PRC

4290 requirements for house and road signage installation.

Specific details of the process would be worked out among the responsible parties listed below.

Other Alternatives: No action continues to leave defensible space creation up to the good will of the homeowner.

Responsible Office: Placer County Building Department, Placer County Fire Safe Alliance partners, including CDF and local Fire Agencies

Priority (H, M, L): Medium

Cost Estimate: There is no cost involved to the responsible parties since the existing building inspection process would be used. (The cost for implementing the certification process required by the legislation is outside the scope of this project since it has to be done anyway.)

Benefit: Life Safety; Reduce property loss - with a zero cost project...

Potential Funding: Existing Budgets

Schedule: Early 2005

Project #7

ENSURE THAT ALL HOMES IN THE PLACER COUNTY FOOTHILLS HAVE PRC 4290 COMPLIANT ADDRESS SIGNS

Issue/Background: Many homes in the Placer County Foothills do not have adequate house signage, which makes it difficult for emergency responders to quickly locate addresses requesting assistance.

Homeowners either are unaware that their house signs are not adequate, and/or do not know where to go to purchase PRC 4290 compliant signs, and/or balk at spending what it costs to obtain such a sign.

Other Alternatives: The only other alternative is no action.

Responsible office: Assistant Chief Loren Snell, CDF Nevada – Yuba – Placer Unit

Priority (H, M, L): High

Cost Estimate: Existing Homes:

- Cost of single PRC 4290 compliant signs is about \$30 plus \$5 for a stake (from The Sign), with a second sign costing \$20 plus stake. The proposed project would provide cost-share funds. Homeowners would pay \$5 to \$10 per sign, plus stake. Low-income homeowners would pay no more than \$5 for both sign and stake. The cost-share funds would provide the rest of the cost.
- There are approximately 7,000 homes in the Weimar, Applegate, Meadow Vista, Foresthill, and unincorporated county around Colfax. Of these, an estimated 50 percent do not have adequate address signage.
- Total estimated number of homes needing signage in the Placer County Foothills: 3,500.
- Cost for the project: \$122,500 total; \$105,000 is needed in cost-share funds if homeowners provide a \$10 match; \$87,500 needed if homeowners provided a \$5 match. (The grant amount would need to include funds for administration of the grant as well as project management, so the actual grant request would be higher. The homeowner co-pays would provide the required matching funds.)
- Some ways to reach the homeowners: (1) during future PRC 4291 Inspections; (2) use local Boy Scout or similar organizations; (3) booths at fairs; (4) newspaper articles; (5) school newsletters; (6) hand out order blanks at supermarkets and home improvement centers.

New Homes:

County building inspector to require installation of PRC 4290 compliant address signs prior to issuing final use permit. These signs are already required by County Code, but enforcement is needed. No additional cost to the County.

Benefit: Homeowners have no easy access to a source for PRC 4290-compliant signage. They have to do research to find a place to buy them. Then they have to be willing to pay \$35 per sign and install it once they receive it. This project would remove all of the above obstacles, and thereby facilitate emergency responders in locating addresses quickly.

The longer the response time, the greater the potential damage:

- Structure fires attacked within 10 minutes of ignition have the greatest possibility of rapid extinguishment, and thus a decrease in potential life and property loss as well as reducing the likelihood that a house fire will spread to the wildland.
- Vegetation fire ignitions must be attacked quickly or they can rapidly become quite large, depending on the amount and condition of the vegetation, the relative humidity, and wind.

- Without medical intervention, certain death can occur in persons with heart attack, severe bleeding, and respiratory ailments in as little as four to six minutes

Potential Funding: Possible funding sources are National Fire Plan or Title III funds from the *Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act of 2000* (AKA “HR 2389 Timber Tax”) payments to Placer County.

Schedule: Applications for HR 2389 Title III Funds are due to the Placer County Executive’s Office in August of each year.

Applications for National Fire Plan Funds can be submitted to the Clearinghouse at any time; however, Federal funding cycles determine when projects will actually be considered for funding. Usually late Fall is the time for submitting concept papers for consideration in the next year’s funding cycle. See http://grants.firesafecouncil.org/resource_center.cfm for more details on the California Fire Alliance Grants Clearinghouse and <http://www.cafirealliance.org/downloads/resourceguide.pdf> for the California Fire Alliance Resource Guide.

Project #8

MODIFY COUNTY CODE (UBC) TO REQUIRE CLASS A ROOFING ASSEMBLY ON A COUNTYWIDE BASIS.

Issue/Background: Equally important for effective wildfire mitigation in Placer County, is the type of materials used in the building construction. Currently the UBC Code as adopted by Placer County requires a Class A Roofing Assembly be used in new roof construction or when more than 20 percent of the existing roof is replaced. This is limited to the central and eastern portion of the County. The Code should be modified to be implemented on a countywide basis. As currently written, the code only arbitrarily applies to certain areas with no distinction between fuel loads in these areas. Stricter application of Fire Codes can reduce future risk from fires.

Other Alternatives: Expand the existing boundary for enforcement of Class A Roofing Assembly to the West including all areas of the County that lies East of the line that is created by Freeway 80 at the intersection with the Southern boundary of Placer County to Highway 65 North at the Northern boundary of Placer County.

Responsible Office: Western Placer County Fire Chiefs Association; Placer County Building Department

Priority (H, M, L): Medium

Cost Estimate: Existing budgets and staff time

Benefit: Life Safety; Reduce property losses. More stringent fire codes will mitigate the effects of future fire events.

Potential Funding: None Necessary

Schedule: Initiate within one year

Project #9

DEVELOP THE FOLLOWING GIS LAYERS FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES WITHIN PLACER COUNTY: FIRE IGNITIONS LAYER, CRITICAL FACILITIES LAYER, AND FIRE HYDRANTS/WATER SOURCES LAYER

Issue/Background: It is misleading to only consider past large acreage fires when evaluating fire risk, because any ignition can lead to a wildfire with major losses, even if the acreage is small (witness the 2000 Heather Fire, which was only 10 acres but resulted in \$305,000 in damages because a house was lost.)

Over 90 percent of wildfires are human-caused, and therefore suitable for mitigation activities.

Readily accessible information is needed in order to know where to focus efforts to reduce ignitions. CDF identifies over ten causes of fires. While the latitudes & longitudes and causes are available in Excel files for each year, this format is not easy to use.

Mapping ignitions by cause for a 5 or 10 year period would give fast visual access to determine where to focus efforts to reduce ignitions and what type(s) of ignition to target. The base map for this would be the roads, cities, and parcels map for the County. The map could be posted to the County's web site for easy access.

While Placer County has some mapped data on critical facilities, the data is incomplete and was not available for analysis during this project. The County's ability to assess risk at all facilities is important. Critical facility risk and vulnerability assessment can be accomplished manually, but it is extremely time consuming and subject to error. Mapped facilities compared against mapped hazard areas will provide the greatest ability to assess risks and vulnerabilities for mitigation planning.

Placer County should have the ability to assess the status of critical facilities at the time of an incident. This assessment is currently accomplished by taking reports from selected facilities as facilities report in. If an agency or employees at a facility do not report then the data is not available and critical facilities may be missed or may be assumed to be intact. Mapped data would improve this process by allowing the Emergency Operations

center to compare a mapped hazard against mapped facilities allowing for a more precise query of affected facilities. Mapped data will significantly improve the direction of damage assessment teams as an example.

Placer County does not currently have a single map with all fire hydrants and water sources. All of the County's fire agencies routinely provide mutual aid into each other's jurisdiction. Mapped fire hydrants and water sources will reduce the time that it takes an engine company to find an adequate water source in the event of a fire. This effort is particularly important in the mountain areas of Placer County, where deep snows bury hydrants every year, causing the affected fire districts to have to dig them out in selected communities either at the time of an emergency or after a heavy snow.

Other Alternatives: Continue to estimate fire mitigation measures based on memory and unmapped data. Continue to estimate critical facilities risk and vulnerability based on un-mapped data. Continue to use manually mapped fire hydrant data that is seldom shared with agencies who are providing mutual aid to a sister agency.

Responsible Office: Placer County Fire Chiefs Association / Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs

Association

Priority (H, M, L): Medium

Cost Estimate:	Fire Ignitions Layer	\$ 6,000
	Critical Facilities Layer	\$12,000
	Fire Hydrant/Water Sources Layer	\$50,000
	TOTAL	\$68,000

Benefit: The development of GIS based mapped data will significantly improve the quality of the County's risk and vulnerability assessments. Mapped data will improve planning accuracy, will improve precision in operations and will improve response timeliness. It is not possible to quantify cost savings in terms of dollars. It is clear, however, that precisely mapped data will significantly improve our efficiency in future mitigation planning projects and will afford first responders and support staff with critical operational data that is essential to their response functions.

Potential Funding: TBD

Schedule: Completion by no later than the next update of the Placer County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, due in 2009.

Project #10

DEVELOP AND FUND AN ENFORCEABLE WEED ABATEMENT ORDINANCE

Issue/Background: Similar to the defensible space issue, weed abatement is an important factor in both reducing ignitions and the potential for fire to spread. An effective, countywide ordinance would further the County's fuel management objectives and would mitigate the risk of wildfires in the County. To be effective, the weed abatement code will need to have language ensuring accountability as well as a strong enforcement component.

Responsible Office: Fire Departments in conjunction with Placer County's Public Works

Priority (H, M, L): Medium **Cost Estimate:** Code Development: Existing budget and staff **Cost Benefit:** Life Safety; reduce property losses **Potential Funding:** TBD

Schedule: Within one year

Project #11

ADD AN EXIT FROM EASTBOUND INTERSTATE 80 ONTO CAPE HORN ROAD FOR USE BY EMERGENCY VEHICLES ONLY

Issue/Background: When Caltrans closed the Magra exit from Eastbound Interstate 80 a side effect was to increase the response time from Colfax to Cape Horn Road.

Emergency responders to the Cape Horn area primarily come from the CDF station in Colfax, Colfax City Fire, and the AMR station in Colfax. The main staging area for firefighting resources on the 2004 Stevens Fire, which threatened Cape Horn, was in Colfax.

With the closure of the Eastbound I-80 Magra Road exit, the minimum response time to Cape Horn from Colfax is 16 minutes via Norton Grade.

Infrastructure resources at risk in the Cape Horn area include: Interstate 80 and its link to nationwide commerce, Union Pacific Railroad, PG&E power lines, PCWA Boardman Canal, Kinder-Morgan high pressure gas transmission line, USFS Wild and Scenic River along the North Fork of the American River, tourism and recreation, and the American River Watershed and its water supply to other areas of California. A wildfire in the Cape Horn area would also threaten the City of Colfax and homes along Norton Grade Road.

The minimum response time could be reduced to under 10 minutes if an emergency exit at Cape Horn was available. Response time is critical because:

- Structure fires attacked within 10 minutes of ignition have the greatest chance of

rapid extinguishment, and thus a decrease in potential life and property loss as well as reducing the chances that a house fire will spread to the wildland. Also, without medical intervention, certain death can occur in persons with heart attack, severe bleeding, and respiratory ailments in as little as four to six minutes.

- Similar statistics hold for rapid extinguishment of wildland fires.
- Norton Grade is a narrow road, with tight turns, and oncoming traffic. Additionally, Norton Grade can become congested with traffic if evacuations are called for.

Wildfire History:

- 1975 Sawmill fire in Cape Horn
- 1977 Another fire occurred in the same area as the Sawmill Fire
- 2001 Ponderosa Fire – came within less than ½ mile of Cape Horn
- 2004 Stevens Fire – burned 934 acres in the American River Canyon bordering Cape Horn; destroyed 2 residences and 2 outbuildings; high winds would have resulted in much higher losses

Other Alternatives: Plan for, build and staff a fire station at or near the Magra exit. This alternative, while suitable, would cost Placer County over \$3,000,000 initially and another \$800,000 yearly for the life of the station.

Responsible Office: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Nevada – Yuba – Placer Unit in conjunction with CalTrans

Priority (H, M, L): Medium

Cost Estimate: In 2004 dollars the off ramp from I-80 is estimated to cost \$5M according to the Placer County 2022 Regional Transportation Plan. Many factors could impact the final cost, such as rising construction costs, any necessity of purchasing property for right-of-way, and perhaps having to realign Cape Horn Road.

Benefit: A structure fire in Cape Horn could readily set the entire area ablaze, or a wildfire from the canyon could enter the area, destroying critical infrastructure that supports the entire County as well as interrupting interstate commerce and travel, not to mention the threatening the lives and property of area residents. The faster the response time for emergency responders, the less chance there is of losing these important resources to wildfire.

It is difficult to put a precise value on the various infrastructure and other resources at

risk in the Cape Horn area, but looking just at the approximately 200 homes in the area, the values at risk are \$80,000,000 (using a median value of \$400,000 per home). The cost of the exit is a very small percentage of the total resources at risk.

Potential Funding: Potential sources of funding are: Federal Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants or SHOPP funds

Schedule: The exit is already included in the Placer County 2022 Regional Transportation Plan.

It would be built during or after the planned Caltrans project to add a truck lane to the Eastbound “Three Mile” (AKA “Colfax Narrows”) area, which is several years in the future. There is no point in doing it sooner, because it would likely have to be redone after the truck lane project.

Engineering specifications will have to be developed (and approved by Caltrans), and funding acquired.

15 NEVADA COUNTY FIRE MITIGATION FRAMEWORK

Background

With its long hot summers, steep terrain, significant accumulations of wildland fire fuels, and significant residential development with lagging infrastructure, Nevada County represents the ideal environment for large, damaging wildfires. Over the years, much has been done to address the problem; from conditioning projects with fire protection measures, to adopting new ordinances in 1992, and most recently the coming together of a wide range of stakeholders to create the Fire Safe Council of Nevada County. Unfortunately, to this point much of the effort towards fire safety has been in response to specific issues or mandates and has not addressed the entire complex problem. The issues of, risk reduction, suppression capability, circulation, public desires, fuels management, affordable housing, evacuation planning, and fire prevention funding all need to be considered as the County addresses the wildland fire problem. A number of similar programs have been developed elsewhere; however, none of them have addressed all of these issues. This document could become a blueprint for other counties to follow.

Proposal

This request proposes that an inclusive effort be put into place to prepare a comprehensive Wildland Fire Mitigation Framework for Nevada County. Currently, within the various stakeholders i.e. fire service, law enforcement, development community, planners, and community groups, there is a wealth of knowledge and high level of awareness that can be captured and utilized to develop a framework for